

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, US

SUBJECT:LEBANESE SITUATION

FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

1. IN MY SEPTEMBER 24 DISCUSSION WITH ALLON, HE ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD BE DONE WITH RESPECT TO THE LEBANESE INTERNAL SITUATION. I SAID AT THE TIME THAT WE WOULD GIVE SOME THOUGHT TO THIS QUESTION AND PROMISED TO ARRANGE FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

2. IN THAT CONTEXT, YOU SHOULD SEEK AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION FURTHER WITH ALLON. WE WANT THIS TO BE A GENUINE CONSULTATION AND TO HEAR THEIR VIEWS. WE SEE THIS AS A CONTINUING PROBLEM, AND WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS SO THAT NO SURPRISES DEVELOP BETWEEN US.

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3. SUBSEQUENT TO MY CONVERSATION WITH ALLON, I TALKED

WITH LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER TAQLA ON SEPTEMBER 30 AND AS A RESULT OF THAT MEETING AND OF THE CONSIDERATION WE HAVE GIVEN TO THE LEBANESE PROBLEM, WE ARE APPROACHING SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE SOME INFLUENCE ON LEBANESE INTERNAL EVENTS, PRINCIPALLY THE FRENCH, THE SAUDI, AND

THE KUWAITI GOVERNMENTS. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE EC-9 IS CONSIDERING MAKING APPROACHES IN VARIOUS ARAB CAPITALS TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEW OF
THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF LEBANON.

4. WE BELIEVE--AND WE ASSUME ISRAEL AGREES--THAT DISINTEGRATION AND POSSIBLE CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON ARE IN NOBODY'S INTEREST. OUR ANALYSIS IS THAT THE SITUATION THERE HAS ENTERED A PHASE IN WHICH A FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL TRANSITION IS TAKING PLACE. THIS IS A PHASE IN WHICH LEBANON MUST BE SEEN AS BEING IN A CONTINUING STATE OF EXTREME POLITICAL FRAGILITY. THE PROBLEM, AS WE SEE IT, IS TO WORK WITH THIS SITUATION IN SUCH A WAY THAT LEBANON DOES NOT BECOME A PAWN FOR MANIPULATION IN THE INTERESTS OF OTHER PARTIES. ARE WE CORRECT IN BELIEVING THAT THIS IS ALSO THE ISRAELI VIEW? HOW WILL ISRAEL POSTURE ITSELF TOWARD THIS SITUATION? WILL IT BE POSSIBLE FOR ISRAEL TO CONTINUE TO SHOW THE RESTRAINT IN BOTH ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS THAT WE HAVE ALL VIEWED AS ESSENTIAL DURING SHORTER PERIODS OF CRISIS IN THE PAST? WE BELIEVE THIS WILL BE IMPORTANT BECAUSE ISRAEL'S ACTIONS CAN HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON LEBANESE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS, EVEN WHERE THEY MIGHT NOT BE SO INTENDED.

5. WE FACE A COMMON PROBLEM IN WORKING OUT OUR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS TOWARD THIS SITUATION. ON THE ONE HAND, NEITHER THE U.S. NOR ISRAEL HAS ANY INTEREST IN UNDERCUTTING OR WEAKENING THE CHRISTIANS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A POINT AT WHICH THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, BY TAKING TOO RIGID A POSITION AGAINST MOSLEM DEMANDS FOR A GREATER SHARE OF POWER, MAY BRING TO A HEAD THE CRISIS WE ALL HOPE TO AVOID AND MAY ITSELF BE THE PRINCIPAL LOSER. WE
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KNOW THE ISRAELIS FEEL THEY HAVE A STAKE IN THE CONTINUED POLITICAL ROLE OF THE CHRISTIANS (ALLON IN SEPTEMBER 24 CONVERSATION REFERRED TO THE DANGERS OF "MOSLEMIZATION" IN LEBANON) AND WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THEIR THOUGHTS ON THIS QUESTION.

6. WE WOULD FURTHER BE INTERESTED IN ANY VIEWS ALLON MIGHT HAVE AS TO USEFUL STEPS THAT THE U.S. MIGHT TAKE

IN RELATION TO THIS SITUATION. FYI. IF ALLON SUGGESTS
MORE ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, THAT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION
FOR ADDRESSING THE QUESTION IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH.
END FYI. KISSINGER

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